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ABSTRACT

This booklet is the second in a series that examines community school centers. Because the exact nature of the planning process for a community school center must be developed in context, specific procedures are not prescribed. Rather, the issues that should be considered are outlined, alternative strategies and solutions are analyzed, and common pitfalls that may be encountered are described. Topics discussed include planning, establishing the philosophy and goals of the center, designing an adminstrative structure, developing an architectural program, and funding both the planning process and construction. (Author/MLF)

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PLANNING COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

EA 011 465

#2 in a series of 6 booklets prepared by EFL

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Community school centers have evolved from many experiments in interagency cooperation and community involvement. One line of descent has been from the community education movement, which has long advocated that schools assume a leading role in expanding and coordinating community services and that education itself be broadly inclusive of all age groups, subject matter, and experience. Another line of descent has been from the parks and recreation fields which pioneered in developing park-schools as coordinated facilities and sites, with shared responsibilities in recreational programming. A third line of descent has been in the movement for citizen participation in government and planning, for which citizen activists and enlightened government officials are due credit.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, which supported the preparation and publication of this series of reports on community school centers. The foundation has long been in the forefront of the community education field and has supported and encouraged community participation and community-based solutions to social problems.

Sincere thanks are due to the planners and participants in over 70 community school centers across the country who have shared with us their experiences, hopes, frustrations, and knowledge. Without this front-line reporting, this series would not be possible. We also thank the individual experts who provided advice and knowledge, and who read and reacted to early drafts.

Major responsibility for researching and writing this series was taken by EFL's Ellen Bussard.

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COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

FOREWORD

Our society is in the midst of change and challenge:

- The make up of our population is shifting, in that there are fewer school-age children, more elderly people, more working mothers, and more people retiring before age 65 and seeking "something to do."
- Ordinary citizens are seeking a greater role in determining our own collective future.
- We are becoming aware of the value of recycling and preserving community resources rather than laying waste and starting over.
- Continuing fiscal crises are challenging public institutions to seek ways of providing services for less money through more intensive use of available resources and cooperative planning.

Community school centers stand at the crossroads of these trends. Whether housed in recycled school buildings or in new facilities cooperatively planned and financed, these centers are becoming a focus of community and neighborhood life. These centers may include libraries, health clinics, elementary or secondary schools, swimming pools and other recreation facilities, day care centers, senior citizen services or other people-serving agencies. They may also be places where community organizations, social clubs, and union locals hold regular meetings and special events. In some, families and friends gather for reunions and baby showers. In common, they may be described as "people centers"; they provide a focus for community life.

This booklet is one in a series that examines community school centers as a phenomenon of national importance to the coordinated delivery of social services, better use of public resources, and revitalization of community life. ■

1 **A Concerned Citizen's Guide to Community School Centers**

2 **Planning Community School Centers**

3 **Managing Community School Centers**

4 **Facility Issues in Community School Centers**

5 **Using Surplus School Space for Community School Centers**

6 **A Resource Book on Community School Centers**

PLANNING COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

INTRODUCTION

A community school center is no less than a radical reorganization of the way social services are provided. Frequently, even the nature of services themselves requires redefinition as traditionally strict lines between provider and receiver become blurred. Isolated jurisdictions among service agencies are challenged and quite often modified.

Planning for such a center should include active involvement of the community's residents and organizations, municipal and private agencies, local government, and schools. It should result from a joint and open-minded examination of local community needs and resources.

Such a study may reveal a number of alternative strategies for improving community life. Depending on resources of people, money, commitment, and facilities, it may point towards construction of a new building, an addition to an existing school, or reuse of surplus space in the community. In the best of all possible worlds, these decisions are made on the basis of objective cost/benefit analysis. However, political processes and opportunistic forces invariably affect the decision.

It may take several years for a conceptual plan to develop and gain acceptance. Thorough early planning of a center should include consideration of programs and services, administrative structure, coordination between groups, and operational funding, as well as design. At the outset, provisions should be made for continued evaluation and planning after the center is operating. The time spent in this kind of deliberate thorough planning has advantages, since planning at an accelerated pace is likely to result in some constituencies and issues being overlooked. Eagerness to construct a building may force commitments which would later be regretted.

Planning a community school center can be an exhilarating experience as individuals and organizations with widely divergent backgrounds discover that they share common goals and concerns and develop new levels of trust and coordination. It can be an enormously frustrating experience when people and organizations find that assumptions, values, and goals are in direct and irreconcilable conflict. Usually, the process of planning a center encompasses both experiences. Cooperative planning will inevitably produce stressful situations requiring negotiation, compromise, and perseverance.

Planning for a community school center is unique to each community, its history and people and politics. Because the exact nature of the planning process must be developed in context, it would be foolish to prescribe specific procedures. Rather, this booklet outlines the issues which should be considered, analyzes alternative strategies and solutions, and describes common pitfalls which may be encountered en route. ■

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Getting started: agreeing to plan

The idea for a community school center may originate from a school district administrator, a community or adult educator, a member of the city planning department, or, more likely, from two or more persons trying to improve existing cooperative community ventures. The forces prompting development of community school centers have differed over the years. Many centers in the 1960s evolved from community activism concerning issues of urban renewal or highway construction, both of which posed immediate threats to neighborhood survival.

During 1968, inner-city riots not only sparked community action, but also forced government and school administrations to give visible attention to neighborhoods which had painfully obvious needs for all kinds of social services and for modern school buildings. At the same time, the federal Great Society programs were funding agencies which were supposed to be meeting the needs of inner-city residents. Amidst this upheaval, some school administrators were questioning the relevance of curriculum, the shape and structure of school buildings, and the role and responsibility of education to the community at large.

In the 1970s, a different set of situations has emerged to prompt consideration of community school centers. The changing demography of the United States is probably the greatest encouragement to reexamination of community needs. The slowdown in birthrate results in more elderly people and fewer school-age children. Changes in life patterns, including the increase of working mothers, one-parent families, and people opting for early retirement, are creating demands for new kinds of social support services and decreasing the demands for elementary and secondary school space.

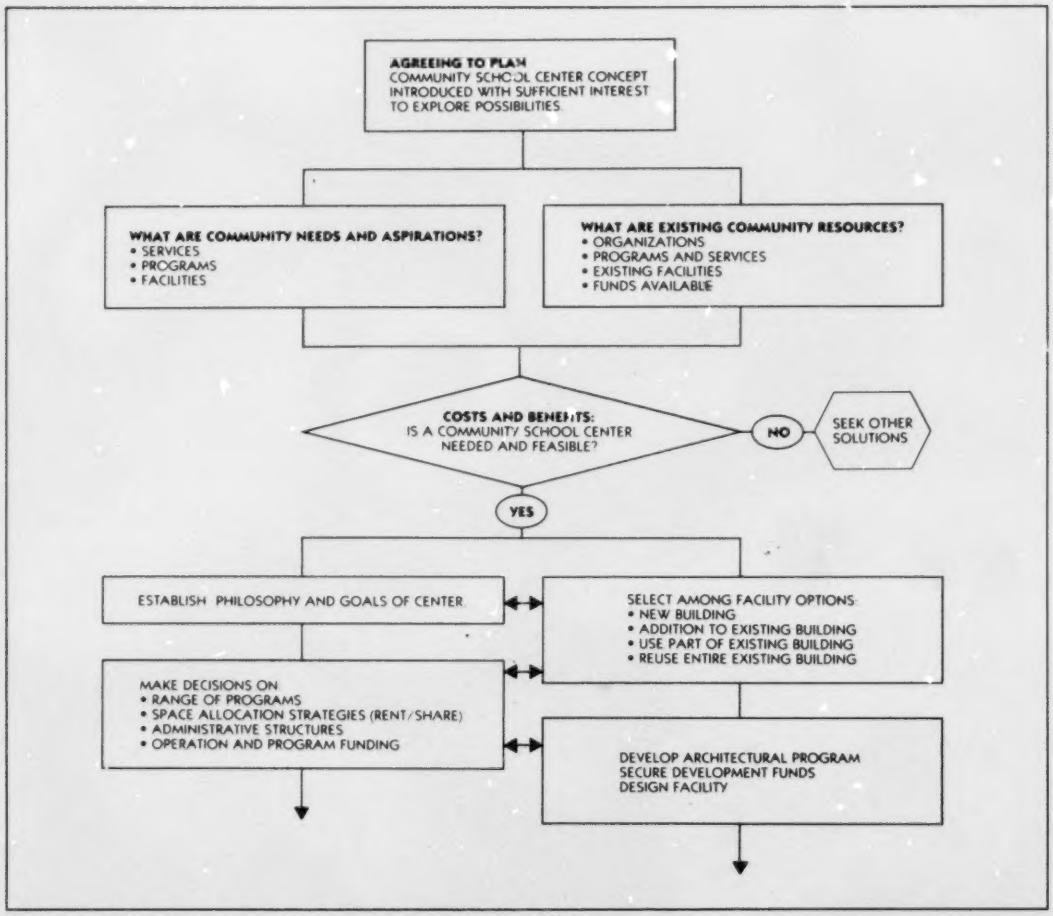
Desegregation strategies have redistributed pupils within cities, resulting in underused schools in one part of town and the need for new buildings in another part. Community activism, no longer the special province of inner cities, is obvious in demands that suburban neighborhood schools be kept open even as enrollment declines, and that government spending and duplication of services be reduced. The national fiscal crisis has forced many communities to examine the uses of their largest capital asset—the school buildings.

Ideally, planning should be coordinated for an entire district or municipality. Centers should be built within the context of an overall plan so that resources can be used most effectively. They should never be allowed to spring up haphazardly.

The following points should be considered from the beginning:

- how many centers to create
- where to locate centers to equitably deliver services to as many people as possible, while avoiding duplication yet providing accessibility
- what degree of decentralization of community services is desirable and economically feasible
- what are the relative costs and benefits of building new facilities, adding to existing facilities, using surplus space in schools or entire surplus schools, and getting more use out of already operating buildings.

A few cities, such as Jacksonville, Florida, have carried out coordinated planning of this kind. However, historically, the forces leading to the development of community school centers have been quite different. They have tended to be focused on individual neighborhoods and even individual sites. The idea may have surfaced when a particular school was closed, or was threatened with closure, and neighborhood residents sought to prolong its life as a community center. An agency may have been looking for new quarters in a neighborhood at the same time that a school district announced plans to abandon a school. Or a new school may have been planned for a certain neighborhood, and, while planning for the school, officials and citizens expanded the concept further. The availability of federal funds for construction of neighborhood facilities prompted construction of more than one community school center.



An outline of the planning process

Although today's centers have more often resulted from specific opportunities and pressures, tomorrow's centers may result from more systematic planning. It is becoming more widely recognized that the forces prompting development of such centers affect all segments of communities. At the same time we have finally learned that system-wide planning can also be neighborhood and community based, that decentralized delivery of services is not incompatible with centralized planning and funding.

Whatever the underlying causes, after the idea of a community school center has surfaced, the next step is to get a sufficient number of groups interested enough to consider the idea and commit themselves to participate in a planning process. This step requires the sponsors to identify the community's needs and opportunities and the people, agencies, and groups which ought to be included. Then, these people must be lobbied for support of the general concept. The most effective lobbying occurs when community people become publicly vocal at the same time as people within the government and school administrations promote the idea within their own bureaucracies. In order to get the agency people interested, one has to explain the benefits that would accrue to each participant, and the real or perceived drawbacks.

The organizers must be patient, because this step—laying the groundwork for planning a center—may take years to accomplish. For example, the Denver School District waited ten years to explore ways of cooperating with the city of Denver, before a receptive person was elected to the city council and a joint study commission could be appointed. While waiting for joint agreement on a big planning project, some of the future partners may try small joint projects to see how well they can work together.

Note, however, that if mutual problems and pressures are severe enough, and/or outside funding sources are identified, there may be a comparatively short time span between the surfacing of the idea for a community school center and the actual planning of the project. ■

The planning group

At some point, official planning has to begin and a more formal group has to be created, then charged with exploring possibilities, feasibilities, and producing concrete recommendations.

There are a number of ways this initial planning can take place. Planning can be community-wide, or, more commonly, focused on one neighborhood site. It can be aimed only at exploring the concept, or it can be immediately aimed at developing a specific center. It can have wide participation from all interested parties or only that of government agencies. The form of this initial planning group will depend, in part, on the history of the development of the idea in the community.

Three examples illustrate how early history influences eventual planning.

• The John F. Kennedy Center in Atlanta, Georgia, was conceived by the superintendent of schools, John W. Letson, who had developed a community school center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, before moving to Atlanta. Originally thought of as a center for agency services, it was planned jointly by top administrators of 18 social service agencies. No community representatives participated in planning the center, and later a coalition headed by the NAACP unsuccessfully brought suit to stop construction.

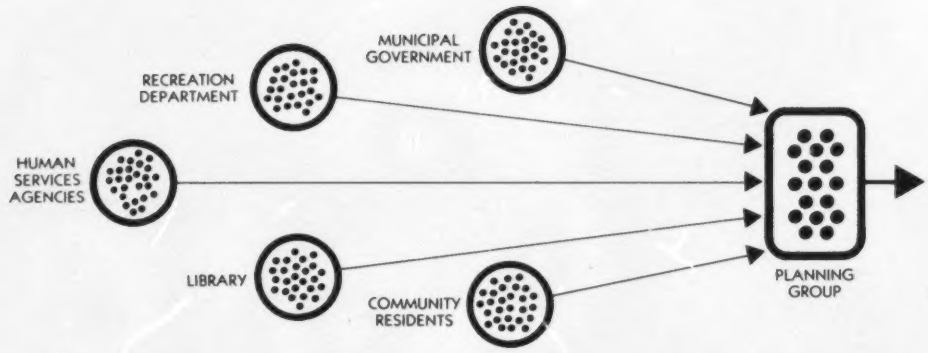
• The Boston community school system began with plans for a single site. A number of forces came together, including a decision by a university medical center to remain in its city location rather than to remove to the suburbs, that center's innovative plans to upgrade its neighborhood by proposing a new kind of school and resource center, the emergence of strong community activism on the part of neighborhood residents, and an enlightened re-evaluation of the role of schools by the city, which was planning a new wave of school contruction for the first time in twenty years. Although original stirrings were based on the Quincy center site, the city broadened its thinking to include the whole school system, eventually constructing 18 community schools for which planning was carried out jointly by city, school, and community people.

• In Vancouver, British Columbia, citizen activism, government activism, and school board support also coalesced at an early date. Community Chest funding enabled citizens' groups to hire a community development worker and establish a local area council of social service workers and citizens. Then the groups took two lines of action. One was to develop a plan for improving social and recreation services in the neighborhood, and the other was to fight the demolition of homes and the construction of a highway through the neighborhood. At the same time, the city of Vancouver established a Department of Social Planning to develop plans for each neighborhood, and an influential school official visited Flint, Michigan, and became enthusiastic about the community school concept. When planning for the center started, it became a joint function of the city, private agencies, and community residents.

The composition of the planning group will influence the nature of the recommendations and the subsequent development of a center or centers. City-wide planning tends to be initiated by government or school agencies, and planning for one site by community groups and other leadership forces unique to a specific neighborhood. The formation of this group, and the mandate it is given are the first of many political actions.

Single-group: government and school agencies

This is the easiest and least risky form of planning group. It is easy because these groups already have legal mandates and funds and may be able to get a project off the ground faster than newly established groups. Also, despite interagency conflicts, all of these people can deal with each other



as professionals on an understood bureaucratic level. In addition, the planning can be carried out with little publicity, so that if it flops it can flop quietly. If agencies find they can agree, they can then bring in community participants.

There are severe disadvantages to this kind of planning group, however. Agencies by their very nature will tend to have a bureaucratic view of "community needs," which might skeptically be labeled "agency needs." The wide scope of services that a community school center might fill will tend to be circumscribed by the services that the agencies themselves fill. For example, government agencies developed the John F. Kennedy center, which basically provides offices for numerous agencies to provide their separate services.

Another drawback is that locking out participation from the community at the beginning makes it more difficult to include community members later, because agency people will already have established working alliances and agreed, at least implicitly, on the scope of the project. And the relative ease of the whole idea quietly dropping puts less pressure on agencies to make compromises, and lessens the likelihood of actually starting a center. Finally, there is also a tendency for the agencies to become paternalistic towards the community.

Single group:
government, school agencies, and community

Planning groups with these three constituencies are likely to consider a broad range of community needs, and to come up with novel solutions which are not bound by traditional jurisdictional lines. Community participation from the beginning guarantees openness of planning and allows personal trust to develop among different groups. There is less likelihood of polarization. At the same time, because the planning process is in the public eye, there is more incentive to bring a project to fruition because if it flops everybody will know about it.

If a joint planning group is to be legitimate, all identifiable community factions must be represented. Sometimes this is accomplished by asking existing groups to designate a representative. Other times the group is open to all interested people, in which case the committee may start out cumbersomely large but it will later, through attrition, shrink to a workable size. The group must also include high-level agency representatives who can speak with authority and make commitments of behalf of their agencies. If neither of these criteria is met, the joint planning group will be a sham.

School and government agency people often see this kind of planning group as threatening to their professionalism and power. This is because the agency people are frequently not aware of the limitations of their vision resulting from long association with an agency. They also feel their expertise is being questioned, and they become wary of dealing with "lay" people on an equal footing.

Compared with normal government and bureaucratic procedures, a joint planning group is radical. Neverthless, places with experience in joint planning have found that not only is it workable, but it produces facilities, services, and administrative arrangements which would not have resulted from planning by agency representatives only.

Two separate groups:
agencies and community

There is little to recommend about this kind of planning arrangement, except that it is better than agency planning alone. Although it recognizes the existence of the community, it preserves the normal power arrangement and relegates community people to a position of petitioning for favors. It also tends to polarize community and agency into two opposing sides, while minimizing different opinions within those groups. This kind of arrangement stacks the deck against cooperation. ■

Background planning

The first task of a planning group should be to answer a few basic questions: What is the community, what are the community's needs and aspirations, and what are the community's existing resources? Although tentative answers to these questions must have already been proposed during the establishment of the formal planning group, it is important that the group set the original answers aside for the time being and start fresh.

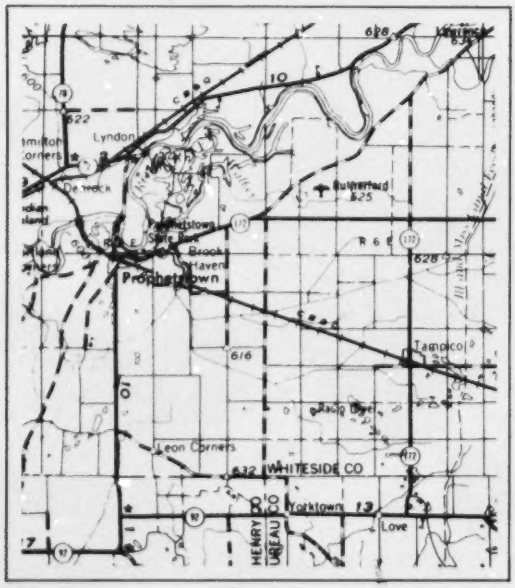
Why? Because the answers to these questions will form the basis for developing the philosophy and goals of the center. This process will insure that the center does not reflect only the initial ideas of the planning group. Making the answers explicit will provide both a forum for community discussion and justification for later choices. It is inevitable that fund limitations will force restrictions on the "ideal" center. It is both philosophically and pragmatically wise to be able to defend the alternatives chosen.

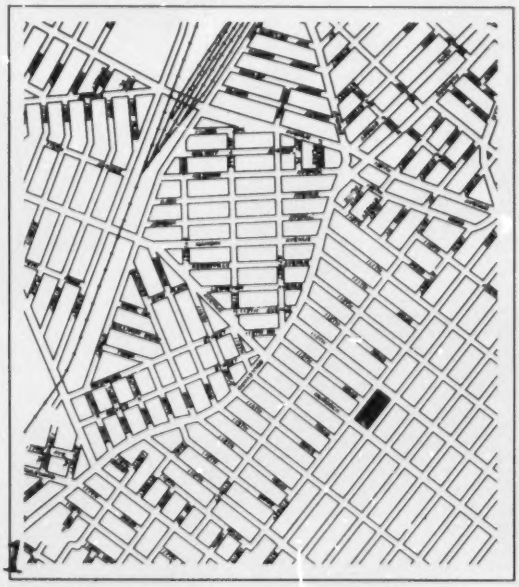
Who is the community to be served?

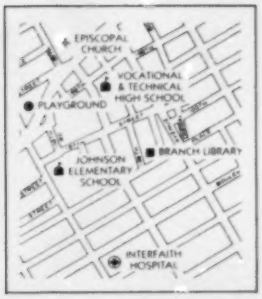
For starters, what are the intended geographic boundaries? In a densely populated city they might extend only a few blocks in any direction; in a suburban town they might cover the whole town; and in a rural setting they might extend for a distance of 30 miles. The primary service area might be the same for all purposes, or it might vary for different services.

To what degree is the "community" viewed as individuals, special categories of individuals (aged, women), and existing groups and organizations (social clubs, unions, Scout troops)? Will programs and services be balanced between these individuals and groups or focus on a single category? For example, if a recreation program is offered, would it serve all people, or only young or poor people, or leagues of self-formed athletic teams such as an employees' group?

In rural districts the service area for a community school center extends for dozens of miles, but in cities the area is measured in blocks







Inventory existing resources

What are community needs and aspirations?

Defining community needs and aspirations, and determining their priorities and feasibilities is the keystone to developing community school centers. Because each community is unique, no two centers will house the same combination of services and facilities. Although examination of other centers can stimulate ideas, patterning a center after a successful one in another community will probably lead to failure.

No matter how well connected and broadly representative individual members of a planning group are, this step should include a great deal of community-wide participation. This is the time when as many ideas as possible, no matter how wild, should emerge. During subsequent planning steps the array of possibilities will be narrowed down as planning progresses. If ideas do not emerge here, they will probably not be considered in time to be included. It is also the time for establishing a procedure to select ideas that will allow for community-wide feedback.

What are existing community resources?

This is a fairly straightforward task of identifying existing agencies, programs, services, and "public" facilities (which may include church halls, for example). These resources should be compared with the list of identified needs. A new center should not duplicate or compete with already existing resources, although it might try to make better use of them. For example, the Kennedy Center in Atlanta was built without a health clinic because there was a clinic located two blocks away.

Methods for gathering information

There are several ways of including broad community participation in planning. Because no method is sufficient by itself, several of the following methods should be used.

Needs survey Systematic survey of a large sample of community residents by mail, or, preferably, in person. This requires a lot of effort, and in some communities, it has been carried out by community groups, high school civic classes, etc. The design of the survey is important. It may include specific questions about services and facilities, and open-ended questions about needs and wishes. It may ask people to estimate how often they think they might use a suggested facility or service, and it should include information about the respondent's age, sex, etc. Some planning groups have conducted two surveys, one for soliciting ideas and a second for assigning priorities to a long list of ideas submitted earlier.

The major advantage of a survey is that it both allows a great many ideas to be generated, and provides a numerical basis for the assignment of priorities to certain options. However, a degree of skill is required to design a good survey, and a great deal of effort is required to administer it. A common failing of surveys is that their answers tend to be skewed towards specific common facilities (such as a swimming pool), rather than less well-defined needs (such as a place to read a newspaper with other people around).

Informal discussions Although not often elevated to a "method," informal discussions with friends, acquaintances, and groups can yield rich information. Brainstorming sessions frequently tap ideas which would not come to light in the more formal survey process. For example, discussion with doctors in a small Michigan town uncovered a need for a place where people recovering from strokes and heart attacks could take their prescribed exercise on safe surfaces in the winter. This was accommodated in a walking program, using hallways of a sprawling school building. Still, while discussions are good for generating novel ideas, they should be used in conjunction with other methods.

Two styles of surveys used in planning for community school centers. The questionnaire on the left was prepared by the Community Advisory Committee for Project 3.9, Community and School Center in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia. The more formal survey on the right was prepared by Anderson & Berdie Associates, Inc., of St. Paul for the North End Multi-Service Center, St. Paul, Minn.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

	You would personally use if included	You would not use personally but feel it is important to include	You feel it is not important to include
DAY CARE			
PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT			
DOCTORS OFFICE			
DENTAL OFFICE			
FAMILY SERVICES OFFICE			
INFORMATION CENTRE			
CANADA MANPOWER OFFICE			
CLERGY OFFICE			
CHILDRENS AID			
COMMUNITY RADIO STATION			
COMMUNITY T.V. STATION			
PROBATION OFFICE			
LAW COURTS			
TOWN HALL			
POST OFFICE			
FEDERAL OFFICES			
ANIMAL SHELTER			
YOUTH HOSPITAL			
EMERGENCY MEASURES ORGZTN			
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY			
OTHER (PLEASE INDICATE)			
PUBLIC WELFARE OFFICE			

SOCIAL-CULTURAL

TEEN DROP-IN CENTRE			
SENIOR CITIZEN DROP-IN			
FAMILY DROP-IN CENTRE			
HOBBY ROOMS			
CLUB ROOMS			
ARTS & CRAFTS CENTRE			
DRAMA STUDIO			
MUSIC STUDIO			
DANCE STUDIO			
THEATRE			
CAPE BRETON MUSEUM			
DANCE HALL			
OBSERVATORY			
PUBLIC SPEAKING SQUARE			
COMMUNITY PARK			
FLOWER GARDEN			
SMOKING LOUNGE			
CHILDRENS ZOO			
T.V. LOUNGE			
cards			
chess			
stamp collecting			
rock collecting			
sewing			
cooking			
fashion shows			

		Very Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
10.	**How important do you feel it is that the following be included in a community center: (circle one response for each item)**				
a.	Daycare service	V	S	L	N
b.	Neighborhood police office?	V	S	L	N
c.	Low cost health care service?	V	S	L	N
d.	Welfare services?	V	S	L	N
e.	Mental health services?	V	S	L	N
f.	Baby sitting referral service?	V	S	L	N
g.	A lounge area for senior citizens?	V	S	L	N
h.	A place to provide low cost nutritional meals for senior citizens?	V	S	L	N
i.	Office space for interested community groups?	V	S	L	N
j.	Card catalogue and facility for returning books from St. Paul Public Library?	V	S	L	N
k.	A service for lending tools for home repair?	V	S	L	N
l.	A service for lending recreational equipment?	V	S	L	N
m.	Areas that can be reserved for use by groups (e.g., for meetings, etc.)?	V	S	L	N
n.	Referral information about available community services?	V	S	L	N
o.	Other (specify): _____				
11.	**How important is it that there be more of the following services for teenagers: (circle one response for each item)**				
a.	Drug and alcohol counseling?	V	S	L	N
b.	Job counseling?	V	S	L	N
c.	Education programs after regular school hours?	V	S	L	N
d.	Recreation facilities (playgrounds, tennis courts, etc.)?	V	S	L	N
e.	Organized recreational activities?	V	S	L	N
f.	Other (please specify): _____				
12.	**How important is it that there be more of the following services for adults: (circle one response for each item)**				
a.	Family counseling?	V	S	L	N
b.	Drug and alcohol counseling?	V	S	L	N
c.	Job counseling?	V	S	L	N
d.	Evening educational programs?	V	S	L	N
e.	Organized recreational activities?	V	S	L	N
f.	Recreation facilities?	V	S	L	N
g.	Other (please specify): _____				

Charettes A committee planning group usually works over an extended period of time and usually has less than 25 people. This time frame, and the nature of the members' representation of specific constituencies, allows for negotiating, caucusing with constituents, receiving feedback, and doing all the other things which are part of the democratic political process.

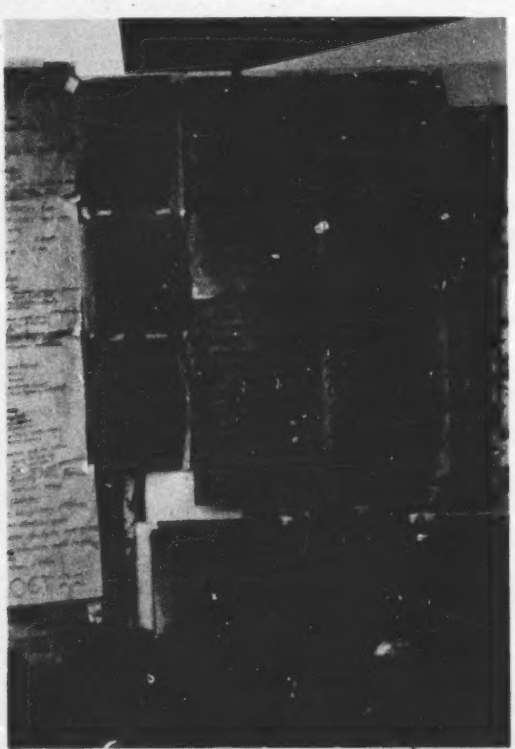
A charette, however, involves many more people in very intense sessions over several days or weeks. Its intensity and characteristic of developing consensus in the midst of members' exhaustion, gives it a close resemblance to labor negotiations. A main intention of charettes is to get participation and creativity from up to several hundred people, without the time and effort spent in several years of protracted meetings.

A charette cannot be expected to take the place of a planning group. It can nevertheless provide a wide range of options for a planning group to consider, or even (as at the Dunbar High School in Baltimore, Maryland) write an agenda of goals. A charette also tends to produce a great deal of publicity, raise expectations, and put a lot of pressure on the planning group for making the necessary compromises to meet those goals.

Use of planning agencies and consultants Local planning agencies can often provide background information relevant to community needs, as well as skill, manpower, and backup support to carry out and compile surveys.

The use of outside consultants may also be appropriate, particularly in conducting community charettes. Charettes require a great deal of organization and management if they are not to disintegrate into shouting matches between opposing factions, or, alternatively, into unfocused recitation of platitudes. Consultants who are skilled in managing group processes and developing consensus should be hired to run charettes. The very fact that they are outsiders, and therefore have no part in the political issues of the community, can make them effective. ■

Community planning charettes—order emerges out of initial chaos



Establishing the philosophy and goals of the center

The next task of the planning group is to establish the philosophy and goals of the community school center, based on the assessment of needs and resources. No center can realistically be designed to meet all the needs of all the people. Choices must be made and priorities established. A few examples can give a good idea of the range of possibilities.

At the Dunbar center in Baltimore, the emphasis is on providing spaces for government social service agencies and getting them to serve the needs of inner-city residents. It does not serve as a meeting place for local neighborhood groups, except those dealing with community development. Nor does it provide sports or other recreational programs for community people. One gets the impression, in fact, that those services would be frivolous pursuits. What counts at Dunbar is helping people to survive, and to advance and achieve in the world.

In an entirely different setting, in suburban Arlington County, Virginia, the major emphasis at one community school is on recreation and cultural arts and music facilities for community use. In many non-poverty areas, recreation and enrichment are the focus of community school centers.

In Atlantic City, one of its centers' prime goals is to serve as a neighborhood meeting place, to foster the growth and health of a great many community groups. Thus it is a site for regular meetings of social clubs, church groups, union locals, and political groups. Fundraising events, group dinners, and even baby showers are held at the center. The center also provides social services and medical and recreational programs for all age groups.

At the Quincy Community School in Boston's Chinatown, a major purpose is to serve comprehensively the needs of the Chinese population. Thus the school offers courses in spoken and written Chinese, Chinese cooking and arts, and preparation for American citizenship. It also houses a branch of the city hall, with a bilingual staff to assist people in dealing with all levels of government bureaucracies, from getting drivers' licenses to filling out income tax forms.

Some of the questions which should be answered in this phase of center development include:

- What is the basic orientation—recreation, enrichment, consolidation of programs, remedial social services, community meeting space, etc?
- Will center services be oriented around agencies (and, if so, private and/or government) which have relative freedom to do their own programming, or will the center be oriented around programs themselves?
- Will the center organize and run its own programs, or coordinate and facilitate programs run by others?
- What kind of relationship will be sought between the center and other agencies and facilities in town?
- Who and what should be located in the community school center?
- To what extent will the building be available for informal use by community residents and groups?
- Will the center have the capacity to respond to changing needs, both short-term and long-term?

Establishing philosophies, orientations, and practical goals helps to assure that the development of the center will not be totally haphazard. It provides a basis for accepting or rejecting specific proposals. And perhaps most important, this statement of philosophy and goals becomes the means for periodic assessment of the center's services and programming. The statement should itself be reassessed periodically, in light of changes within the community. ■

Policies Regarding the Focus of the Centre

That Project 3.9 should essentially be a community centre acting as one part of a larger town centre. The project should not include commercial, town, and government facilities directly but should encourage and recommend they locate close by to strengthen the town centre.

Policies Affecting the Type of New Built Space

1. Facilities high on the priority lists should be included in the centre whenever possible. Low priority items should be included only if they are low cost or can be incorporated into spaces which have a higher priority rating.

2. Facilities should be chosen that will provide the most opportunities for multi-use, and for use by many people per amount of space at any given time.

3. Facilities should be chosen that will offer the widest range of use by the entire community. Facilities should thus be provided to suit all age and interest groups.

4. Facilities should be grouped together whenever compatible use is possible to make more effective use of space and programs.

Policies Affecting Existing Facilities in the Community

1. Existing facilities presently available in the immediate area should be open and used as much as possible by the community and should be integrated where possible with the new administration.

2. Existing facilities and services already present in the community should not be duplicated unless existing facilities are nearly overused at present, or are inadequate for the activities the community would like to see performed in them, and are high on the priority list.

3. Renovation of existing facilities to make them more useable and a more integral part of the centre should be encouraged.

Policies Affecting Commercial Facilities

Because of limited funding, competition with private enterprise, and problems with joint provincial federal funding of projects with commercial facilities, the following policies regarding commercial facilities emerged:

1. Commercial facilities should not be provided out of centre funds. Neither building space nor land should be provided.

2. The only exception to this policy be for soft service facilities such as coffee shops which would complement the use of other community facilities.

3. Private enterprise should be encouraged to develop compatible commercial facilities on adjacent property, and the community centre should be related (i.e. by covered walkways, etc.) to these commercial facilities and the crowds they generate.

4. Certain community facilities (i.e. schools) should be located away from commercial facilities and others (i.e. library, information centre, commercial services) be more related and help form the liaison between the community facilities and the large group of people attracted to the commercial facilities.

Policies Affecting Community Social Services

In order to provide a community facility that can respond to changes in community need, remain flexible in use, can avoid becoming the particular territory of any specific organized group, the following policies relating to community social services emerged:

1. Community social services normally provided by the private sector and regarded as commercial in nature (i.e. doctor's office) should be governed by the policies regarding commercial space.

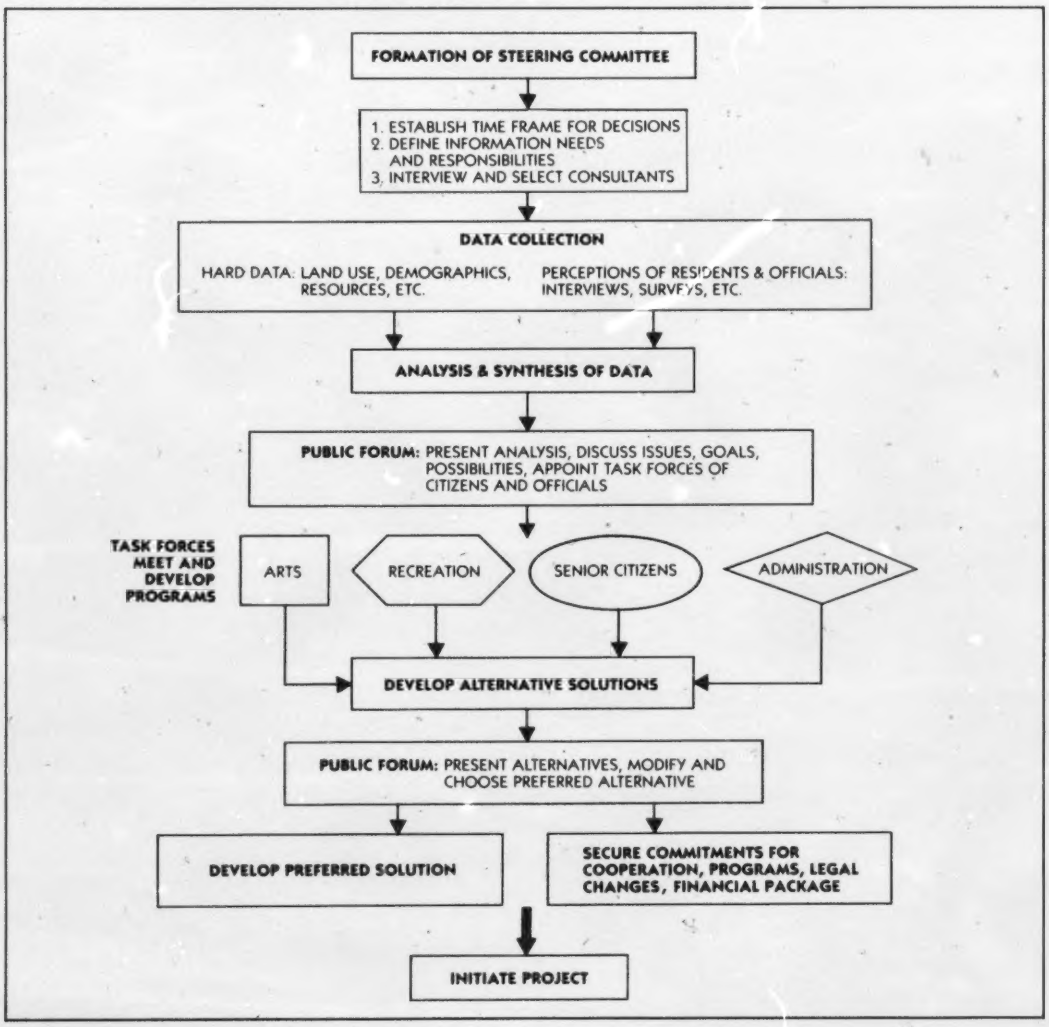
2. Community social services normally provided by the government sectors and regarded as regional or district headquarters (i.e. public health, Canada Manpower, post office) should be encouraged to locate on adjacent property and be related to the community centre facilities.

3. Local community social services which are not punitive or embarrassing (i.e. day care, information centre) should be provided as part of the centre along with educational and recreational services.

4. Local counselling services should be provided with a common facility to foster an integrated delivery of services. The facility should act as a centre for local services of a temporary nature, should not be identifiable with any one group. Those services which expect to need permanent facilities over a long period of time should be encouraged to locate adjacent to the site.

Detailed planning—introduction

Up to this point, planning has proceeded by a series of sequential steps. Now that detailed planning is about to start, it is necessary to carry out three major aspects of the planning in parallel: designing the administrative structure, developing an architectural program, and putting together a financial package for the center's construction. Although each is a distinct subject area, each has an interlocking dependence on the others. ■


FORMATION OF STEERING COMMITTEE
1. ESTABLISH TIME FRAME FOR DECISIONS
2. DEFINE INFORMATION NEEDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
3. INTERVIEW AND SELECT CONSULTANTS
DATA COLLECTION
HARD DATA: LAND USE, DEMOGRAPHICS, RESOURCES, ETC.
PERCEPTIONS OF RESIDENTS & OFFICIALS: INTERVIEWS, SURVEYS, ETC.
ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS OF DATA
PUBLIC FORUM: PRESENT ANALYSIS, DISCUSS ISSUES, GOALS, POSSIBILITIES, APPOINT TASK FORCES OF CITIZENS AND OFFICIALS
TASK FORCES MEET AND DEVELOP PROGRAMS
ARTS
RECREATION
SENIOR CITIZENS
ADMINISTRATION
DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS
PUBLIC FORUM: PRESENT ALTERNATIVES, MODIFY AND CHOOSE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
DEVELOP PREFERRED SOLUTION
SECURE COMMITMENTS FOR COOPERATION, PROGRAMS, LEGAL CHANGES, FINANCIAL PACKAGE
INITIATE PROJECT

This chart illustrates the series of planning steps used in the critical path method of planning for community school centers

Designing an administrative structure

The importance of designing an administrative structure at an early point is frequently overlooked, while considerable attention is focused on constructing the center.

However, establishing and carrying out the administration of a community school center is not a minor task. It touches on all the vulnerable issues of power and sharing, which are the greatest stumbling blocks to success. An administrative structure is a political solution to the complex process of balancing conflicting interests, developing cooperation and coordination, and assigning responsibility and authority.

At the planning stage, it is comparatively easy to "try on" different relationships and structures and to achieve consensus. After a center is operating, it is very difficult to experiment because, no matter what change is suggested, some participants will feel attacked and betrayed. Administrative structures—good or bad—have been fairly permanent. And more than one center has suffered severely because it did not adequately think through administrative relationships during the planning stage.

Four major issues are important to planning administrative systems: interagency relationships, power distribution and community participation, conflict and change, and legal constraints.

Interagency relationships

Community school centers have at least two agencies, and usually more, involved in planning, funding, administering, and programming. Each of these agencies is accustomed to running its own show on its own terms. Cooperation and coordination in providing services are usually foreign concepts—more frequently agencies ignore each other or compete with each other for money.

All agencies should recognize that every other agency is also new to this game, give each other leeway, and anticipate that every agency will have reservations. The goal of the center need not be to merge the identities of the participants, but to seek ways in which they can work together to improve and augment services while maintaining their separate identities.

Interagency conflicts in the planning process should not be downplayed or glossed over. Conflicts are inevitable, and two of the purposes of planning are to identify the sources of conflict and to reach mutually acceptable resolutions. If these are not done, if one agency does not accept the solution, then the conflict will surface in a more damaging way after the center has opened. (This is one reason why all agencies should be represented in the planning group, and why each representative should rank high enough in his or her agency to speak with authority and make commitments.)

The ultimate nature of relationships worked out between agencies has varied enormously.

Atlantic City The three sponsoring agencies (the city, the schools, and an umbrella human services agency) jointly make all decisions about program, space, and policy matters. They have almost merged their identities as far as the centers are concerned, so that separate sponsorship of programs is not publicized and is generally not known to people who use the center.

Atlanta The relationship among nearly 20 government service agencies (welfare, state parole board, city recreation department, etc.) at the J.F. Kennedy center is much more tenuous. Each agency carries out its separate service function independently, although agency members try to keep abreast of each others' jobs and make referrals easier. Not surprisingly, the center does not have a single brochure or other information describing in any detail the services available.

Springfield, Massachusetts The New North Community School lies somewhere between the previous two. The center has participants from a

number of government and neighborhood development agencies. Each agency runs its own programs, but all are reviewed and developed together, and the agencies participate in joint program efforts. They publish a single listing of programs and services which are identified by agency sponsorship.

Power distribution

How do concepts of power and authority enter into community school centers? What kinds of planning relate to power? A checklist of spheres of power would include authority to:

- appropriate money
- raise money outside
- budget money
- hire staff
- direct staff
- determine programs
- select tenant agencies
- establish policy
- assign and schedule space
- delegate power...

and the ability (never authorized) to undercut others, lobby, convince, rouse, etc.

One can have the power of direct decision-making, of initiating action in any of these spheres, or one can have power of reviewing and vetoing decisions. Additionally, power over any of the above items can be held by one person (or agency), or it can be spread more or less thinly among participants (usually in the form of councils) and more or less evenly (one single governing council or a governing council and a separate advisory council).

In all community school centers, power is spread around to some degree. Three examples cover the range.

Elizabeth, New Jersey At the community school, George Washington School Number One, power is officially vested in the school system, which appropriates money and hires the community coordinator. The coordinator, who is responsible to the school principal, in turn determines most programs, assigns and schedules space, and hires staff. Several agencies, with separate funding, staff and programs, use school "community" space, but do not formally contribute to determining the center's programming as a whole. A community advisory council is occasionally convened to help solve problems which arise.

However, because the school district derives its funds from the city budget, and the coordinator acts as liaison with the mayor, there is close collaboration between the city government and the school administration in determining policy, programs, and funding. Although community input is informally sought, the community holds no legal power in governing the center.

Boston Much of the power in the community school system has been delegated to governing councils made up entirely of community people. These councils have the authority to budget money, seek outside money, hire and direct staff, determine programs, agencies and policies, and assign and schedule space (although only after 3:00 PM in those parts of the building designated as community or shared spaces). However, the city retains the power to appropriate funds (which represent the majority of funds for most of the 18 schools), and the central community school administrative office (a city agency) reserves the power to review and veto budgets. Since the whole system is a creation of the city government, which delegates all the other powers to the community councils, the city presumably has the power to shut it all down as well.

Vancouver, British Columbia The administrative structure at the Britannia Community Services Center distributes power quite broadly. Funds are largely appropriated by the city to the parks

board, the library board, and the center's governing board. The governing board, two-thirds of whose members are community people and one-third senior agency people, has the power to set programs, schedule space, hire and direct administrative staff, establish policy, etc. It draws up legal contracts with agencies, including the library and city recreation department, outlining service agreements. Thereafter, agencies pursue their own programs with their own funds and staff. Because the center involves complex ownership of buildings and land (title to land and buildings, and even portions of buildings, is divided between schools and city), it is unlikely that any one agency has the power to close the center.

The planning group must consider who is to have what power in each of the areas outlined. Usually there is a system of checks and balances, so that no one group has all the power. It is worth noting that retention of veto power by a governing agency allows for a great deal of delegation of power to initiate actions, but the power has rarely been used.

Dealing with conflict

Planning should anticipate future conflict and the need for change, and it should set up mechanisms for accommodating each. Although an informal and well-intentioned "let's see how it works out" attitude might seem appropriate for a new kind of venture, its inadequacies will be painfully obvious by the time serious conflict arises.

Even if all major conflicts are resolved during the planning process, they may later re-emerge after the center is operating, because of unanticipated circumstances, shifts in political atmosphere, or changes in personnel. The enthusiasm and willingness to compromise, which is characteristic of the early days of any new enterprise, are likely to diminish with time.

It appears that simply having a system for dealing with major conflicts may play an important role in keeping them under control.

In both Atlantic City and Springfield, the handling of serious conflict is quite autocratic. All power rests ultimately with the school board. In normal times most of the power is delegated or shared (including the hiring of key staff). The Springfield center is run by a community school cabinet, consisting of representatives of agencies, government, neighborhood groups, the school, and parents; the two Atlantic City centers are run by a triumvirate of city, school, and human services agency, with additional participation by a community advisory council. However, if there developed a serious crisis which could not be handled by regular means, the school board would step in and take over. It is interesting to speculate whether this reservation of ultimate power by the school board has permitted it to accept greater community participation than it would have otherwise. In neither city has the school board needed to activate its ultimate authority yet.

Boston, which has given almost total control to community councils, has also developed the most elaborate procedure for dealing with conflicts in its community schools. The city has a document outlining the steps to be taken in filing grievances, holding hearings, appealing rulings, etc. Final authority rests with the city-wide board of representatives from each center's council. To our knowledge, this procedure has never been invoked, even though there are now 18 community schools in the system.

The techniques for dealing with conflict appear to be much less important than the agreement by all participants, during the planning stage, to establish conflict resolution procedures.

Legal constraints

The kinds of administrative structures that can be established depend upon state laws. Each state's municipal and education codes are the rele-

vant sections to research. States vary tremendously in the degree and nature of intergovernmental cooperation they authorize. Frequently the law itself is not at all clear because municipal and school district cooperation was not envisioned when the law was written. And the law may have been amended to allow for other kinds of municipal cooperation, which leaves the status of school-municipal cooperation more uncertain than before.

Several states specifically encourage cooperation in providing recreation services, but are not clear about other kinds of cooperation.

For example, Colorado explicitly provides for a broad range of cooperative agreements for recreational facilities among schools, municipalities, and counties. Each is given authority to acquire property and to operate recreation facilities and systems, and is also authorized to "cooperate in its conduct in any manner which is mutually agreed upon or may delegate the operation of the system to a recreation board created by any or all of them...." (Colorado Revised Statutes 1973, Sections 29-7-101 to 108.)

New York State law appears to have internal inconsistencies. One section of the municipal law permits town and school districts to jointly operate playgrounds and neighborhood recreation centers, but has been interpreted not to allow a school district to lease these properties to a town for it to run a recreation program. (New York State General Municipal Law Article 14, Section 224-b and 20 op. State Compt. 423, 1964.)

However, another section of the same law (Section 119-o), which provides for intergovernmental cooperation, received the following opinion from the state comptroller in 1968, "A school district, because it lacks the power to acquire real property for, or to operate, a recreation project alone, cannot agree to do so with other entities pursuant to this article." (24 op. State Compt. 763, 1968)

Permissible uses of "schools" owned and operated by school boards have frequently been broadened in recent years. Taking New York as an example again, in 1972 state education law allowed for leasing of "real property" to "non-profit corporations for purposes relating to youth or to political subdivisions for their lawful purposes...." In June, 1977, this provision was extended to include "non-profit corporations for purposes relating to youth or aged." Only two months later, in August, 1977, the law was again amended to include "non-profit community service organizations." (NY State Education Law Article 9, Section 403-a-3.)

Another section of the New York State Education Law pertains to use of schoolhouse and grounds at the discretion of the school board. Prior to 1976 such uses were allowed "when the building was not in use for school purposes." In 1976 this was amended to also allow use "when the school is in use for school purposes if in the opinion of the trustees or board of education use will not be disruptive of normal school operations." (New York State Education Law, Article 9, Section 414-1.)

Because applicable laws vary so much, and are in a state of flux, each planning group will have to investigate the law in its own state. The group may ask for a ruling from the state attorney general or comptroller. It may decide whether to interpret laws broadly or narrowly, that is whether to consider anything legal which the laws do not prohibit, or whether to consider legal only those things for which the laws specifically provide. The group will then have to decide whether to work within the state guidelines or seek to have them changed. ■

Determining space needs and developing an architectural program

None of the center planners interviewed for this study had been able to foresee the enormous demand for space which developed after the center opened. All of them feel their programs are curtailed due to a lack of space.

Established agencies and organizations that were not included in original plans have requested space after the centers opened. Frequently the process of creating a center sparked the formation of new community groups, which have requested office or meeting space. Space needed for meetings, conferences, and offices seems to have been underestimated everywhere.

The reasons for this are understandable. Architects are expected to assign spaces to specified occupancies and cannot draw lots of spaces labeled "?". And the people proposing to spend money on a center have to justify the expenditures to people providing the funds—whether those people be taxpayers or government agencies. Therefore most centers are planned around identified needs, programs, and agencies.* While some centers are more flexible than others in terms of layout, design, and programming, all of them have felt pressure for more space within two to five years of opening.

Nor do any of the centers have plans for expanding their building plants. For the most part they were not designed with expansion in mind. Further, expansion is usually politically untenable. The buildings themselves represent large capital investments, and in cities where there are only one or two centers the political pressures push for development of new centers in other parts of town, rather than adding to the existing center. Public sentiment runs along the lines of "They got theirs, now we want ours."

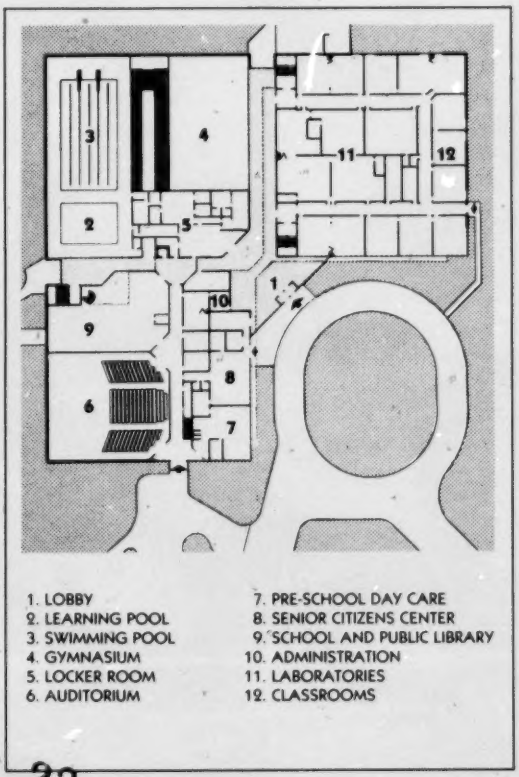
To date, it appears that each community school center only gets one chance at building, and the lesson for planners is that they should provide as much space as they can possibly justify.

A major task of the planning group is to determine the basic scope of the center. The group must decide how much space is needed, what kinds of spaces are needed and in what arrangement, and what kind of "feel" the center is to have.

The planning group should refer back to the planning stages already completed, to the statement of community needs and resources, and to the philosophy and goals for the center. Then the group can decide what kinds of spaces are

*Centers located in recycled buildings have less trouble with space because all of the rooms start out with undefined purposes and many of them stay that way, which can be an advantage.

Community and school share spaces on ground floor of the Strait Area Education and Recreation Center in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia



needed, such as swimming pools, bocci courts, exercise rooms, art rooms, music rooms, woodworking shops, classrooms, offices, conference rooms, lounges, and coffee shops.

How much can spaces be shared for several purposes? Does each agency really need its own suite of offices, conference rooms, and waiting rooms for full-time use? The more that spaces can be shared, the more activities and programs that can be accommodated. And the more efficiently that services can be delivered.

As great as the temptation is to design for the specific needs of agencies represented on the planning committee, the temptation should be resisted. Often the burden of responsibility for this decision rests with community representatives on the committee. The center should be designed so that allocation of spaces can change as community needs change. Because this is an important point, which often gets lost in the shuffle, let it be repeated: The center should be designed so that allocation of spaces can change as community needs change.

The planning group also has the responsibility of selecting and working with the architects for the center. Planning groups can easily be intimidated by architectural expertise, and some architects will encourage this intimidation. It is important that the group select architects who are willing to work with the group in exploring how the goals of the center can best be expressed in spatial and design terms. The planning group and the architects should be partners in this venture and assume joint responsibility for the outcome. ■

Funding the planning process

A thorough planning effort requires suppo t funding. Most commonly the planning process is subsidized by participating agencies which not only pay the salaries of staff members who are actively involved in the planning effort, but which also absorb office expenses. Community participants usually volunteer their time.

However, a process which includes a survey of community residents, hiring of professional consultants, and/or holding a charette involves considerably more expense than can be easily absoroed by agencies or than is normally allocated for planning. In order to participate as equal partners, community people should also have access to funds.

A number of sources have been tapped for these "extra" funds in different communities.

In Vancouver, the Community Chest paid the salary of a community organizer. This person was in essence the staff person for the community, and performed a great deal of legwork for community people who themselves could only devote their spare time. The city Department of Social Planning and the Educational Research Institute of British Columbia together hired a consultant to prepare a study of administration and organization for the center and a cost comparison of different administrative systems. Extensive architectural programming, including community participation, was funded out of construction bond issues.

In Springfield, Massachusetts, most of the planning effort for the New North Community School was subsidized by the school department and other cooperating agencies. However, a special bill was passed in the state legislature authorizing the city to borrow money or issue bonds for as much as $375,000 to pay for architectural planning fees.

In Baltimore, Maryland, a charette was held for two full weeks to plan the Dunbar center. Participants included a wide range of consultants, city and agency representatives, and community representatives. This charette cost a total of

1966	First federal grant for innovative education planning, for preliminary planning by Tufts New England Medical Center Planning Office (Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act)	$ 26,500
1967	First federal grant for pilot school health care planning (Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act)	110,000
1967	Educational Facilities Laboratories grant for programming and documentation	30,000
1968	Second federal grant for education planning (Title III)	39,402
1968	Second federal grant for pilot school health care planning (Title III)	102,045
1969	Carnegie Foundation grant	15,000
1970	Committee for Permanent Charities grant (Boston-based foundation)	25,000
1970	Schrafft Foundation grant (Boston-based foundation)	5,000
1970	Grant from Massachusetts Education Department for Quincy School Community Council	12,000
1970	New England Telephone Company grant (headquarters in Boston)	2,000
1970	EFL grant for legal costs	6,000
1970	John Hancock Insurance Company grant (Boston-based company)	5,000

Funding sources for planning
Quincy Community School, Boston, Mass.

$40,000 for accommodations, consultant fees, materials, and even stipends for community people who gave up two weeks of work. Funding came from the city planning department, the public schools, the state board of education, and the United States Office of Education.

In Boston, over a four year period of planning, very substantial funding was accumulated from a variety of sources which included private foundations, federal education grants under Title III of the ESEA, private corporations, and the state education department.

In some communities the municipal government, school department, and other agencies can afford to allocate planning money and are willing to make substantial commitments. However, other sources are often sought and are always welcomed. Private foundations, particularly those with a local focus, would be good sources to approach. Relatively small amounts of money used for planning purposes can produce large visible effects, a condition that foundations like.

The new Community Schools and Comprehensive Community Education Act of 1978 may become a source of federal planning money. This act has now passed both houses of Congress and is sitting before appropriations committees. Nearly $500 million is being sought over a five-year period.

Under the act, funds may be applied toward the "cost of planning, establishing, expanding, and operating community education programs." And community education is broadly defined as "a program in a public building...used as a community center operated by a local educational agency in conjunction with other groups in the community, community organizations, and local governmental agencies, to provide educational, recreational, health care, cultural, and other related community services for the community...." ■

Funding construction

How much does it cost to build (or renovate an existing building into) a community school center? The major new community centers constructed in the early 1970s carried price tags ranging between $3 million and $22 million, depending on the scope of the project. (Inflation would raise these costs if the centers were built now.) Renovation costs depend on the condition of the building and the amount of renovation undertaken. Some places have opened with no renovation whatsoever, and others have spent as much as $1 million for extensive renovation.

The economic picture in 1978 is in many respects gloomier than it was only a few years ago when the first and second waves of community school centers were planned and built. Several cities that had planned to construct additional centers have found that changes in federal programs or state laws have made these plans impracticable. But although some funding programs are being phased out, others, which may take their places, are being developed. And the fiscal crunch may prompt willingness to undertake joint ventures to reduce overall expenditures.

Construction of community school centers will probably always require creative patching together of funds from several sources. Local government, state, federal, and private sources should all be thoroughly researched. An analysis of the funding patterns of existing centers and new trends will provide guidance for fundraising strategies for new centers.

Local government

In generating local government funds for construction, the two most important factors appear to be the legal relationship between the school district and the local government unit (whether town, city, or county), and the degree of support for the project that can be generated among local government officials.

It is probably significant that almost all newly constructed community school centers are located in places where the school district is fiscally dependent on the local unit of government.* That is, school funds are directly appropriated through the city or county, and are not subject to public referendum. This situation tends to require greater communication between school and government administrators which, if it works well, can lead to levels of cooperation not likely elsewhere. Further, the school tends to be seen as an important element in the overall health of the municipality. Sharing of costs and resources (such as donation of land) appears to be easier when all the resources come from a common pool rather than from separate school and municipal taxing jurisdictions. There are fewer fears of competitive empire building. Even when a public referendum may be required for a construction bond issue, joint support by the city and school department is politically helpful.

Legal relationships between fiscally dependent school districts and local government units are straight-forward. Where the school district is fiscally independent, state education and municipal law must be examined to determine what kind of municipal-school cooperation is expressly allowed or prohibited or may be implied. In some states, for example, it is permissible for a school district to build on city-owned land and vice versa, while in other states this is expressly forbidden. Joint ownership is allowed in some states but not in others.

It is probably also significant that almost all community school centers are located in places where the school district and local government units are geographically coterminous: where there is one city school district and one city government, or, as in the case of Arlington, Virginia, one county school district and one county government. In these cases it is easy to argue that both jurisdictions serve the

*HEW estimates only 15% of school districts nationwide are fiscally dependent on municipal or county governments.

same constituents, and that money invested will benefit the same users. It is more difficult, in areas with geographically overlapping municipalities and school districts, to argue for mutual benefits or to coordinate proportional contributions from several jurisdictions.

The keys to getting local government funds in any case appear to be a) tying the health of the schools to the health of the municipality, and b) showing that the municipality will derive benefits greater than the cost of a cooperative venture. Because the impetus for community school centers most often comes from the school district, school administrators usually have the burden of convincing the municipality. Their strongest ally within the government is usually the recreation department. However, in relatively poor cities that are attempting a renaissance, community school centers have been successfully tied to revitalization of the city as a whole.

Generating support of the local government administrators is important above and beyond the funds they can contribute directly. Government administrators can be instrumental in directing federal monies (revenue-sharing and community development block grants) towards community school development. Program funding is often available from state and federal sources, but these programs need places to occur. Since construction funding from these sources is scarce, local governments should take the stance of looking at return in terms of funded programs for initial investment in facilities.

Regular state aid to school districts

Because community school centers are in large part schools, state aid for school construction frequently provides a significant portion of construction funding.

The amount and availability of state contributions varies considerably. At the time that the Dunbar High School was constructed in Baltimore the state routinely funded school construction 100%. In most states there is a percentage formula, based on the wealth of the school district, such that a city could get substantial funding and a wealthy suburb very little. In other states there is a system of ranking priorities; in these cases it is wise to investigate the funding history of the program before deciding not to apply. For example, Connecticut has an elaborate ranking system of priorities, but to date no district has been refused substantial state aid.

Because of rising costs and rising expectations, however, some states are establishing limits on state aid for constuction or are specifically restricting state aid for other than strictly educational parts of a plant.

As a result of concern for the increasing amount of money being spent on state aid, Massachusetts enacted a bill in 1976 which, for the first time, established a ceiling on state aid. This ceiling is based on a maximum gross square footage per pupil, and only areas used for part of the academic program are eligible for funding. Although the space limits are adequate for most schools, and have in fact had a very minor effect on requests for aid, a district that wanted to construct a large auditorium or swimming pool for community and school use would probably exceed the area allowed for reimbursement.

Connecticut, in the face of fiscal difficulties, amended its law in 1976 to specifically limit aid for facilities that it considers "embellishments" to the basic educational plant. The normal rate of construction aid is 50% of eligible project costs, regardless of the wealth of the district. The amendment limits aid to auditoriums for seating capacity of one-half the designed enrollment. The cost of additional seating capacity must be borne entirely by the community. Other embellishments, including outdoor athletic facilities, tennis courts, swimming pools, and seating for spectators in gymnasiums, are eligible for 25% state aid, half the normal amount. One official in the state department of education expressed the state's position

this way, "We are not interested in community affairs; we are interested in the education of the student."

It is likely, if the fiscal crisis continues, that states which provide construction aid for schools will limit that aid through one or another mechanism, to reduce their portion for heavily shared school and community facilities.

However, states do not seem reluctant to fund the educational parts of buildings defined as "schools," if those buildings have non-school services elsewhere in the building.

If funds can be raised from other sources for the non-school portions of the building, it will probably be possible to construct a single facility as a community school center.

Special state funds

Special funding is available for limited periods of time and is usually awarded competitively. Most special funding from state and federal sources is intended to upgrade impoverished areas. The need is established through a variety of indexes, such as income level, property tax base, condition of housing stock, and the state of school buildings. Atlantic City received nearly one-half of its funding for two community school complexes from state emergency building program appropriations in 1968 and 1971. The Springfield project received additional state funds because it was part of a desegregation plan for the city.

Although many states are in a period of fiscal retrenchment, the state of New Jersey enacted a new school building construction aid law in 1978. This law provides for state allocation of up to $80 million to assist local school districts to renovate or replace deteriorating school buildings and to construct new facilities. Priority will be assigned facilities which will provide "general community or social services" in addition to regular school services.

Special federal programs

A number of community school centers benefited from a variety of federal categorical grant programs, none of which is in existence any more. These included Urban Renewal (Springfield and Pontiac), HUD Legacy of Parks/Open Space (Springfield), HUD Neighborhood Facilities Grants (Springfield, Atlantic City, Baltimore, Atlanta, and Pontiac).

Categorical grants have given way to various general purpose funds, including revenue-sharing and community development block grants, whose uses, based on federal guidelines, are determined at municipal or county levels. Although community school centers are now eligible for funding under both programs,* there are as yet no available statistics to indicate whether they are being used for community school centers. Because centers must compete with many other uses for these funds (from filling potholes to supporting counseling programs) it is essential that local government support be obtained.

A more recent federal program, the Local Public Works Act, awarded funds in 1976 and 1977 directly for a variety of community and school facilities. The largest criteria for funding in this program have been the level of unemployment and readiness to begin work.

Although there are currently no further appropriations anticipated under this Act, there is pressure in Congress to continue the program. President Carter has proposed a related act as a replacement, known as the Labor Intensive Public Works Act. It is likely that some compromise will be worked out, so that some kind of public works funding will be available. Each of these two laws, as now written, requires that projects have sponsorship of the municipal or county government.

*Block Grant funds can go to a "neighborhood facility" whose intended use is primarily not by the school. Portions of Community School Center buildings have qualified for this designation (Springfield, Atlantic City, and Baltimore).

Another proposed law (Senate Bill 792), which is currently in Senate committee, would provide funds specifically for conversion of closed school buildings to "productive educational and social service purposes." This program would operate through grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to local governments.

Communities seeking special funding usually have to be aggresive in their search because the appropriations for these programs are often insufficient to meet the needs of all eligible communities. In 1971, a HUD review of the Neighborhood Facilities Program* reported, "Regional staff feel they could easily fund three times the current number of approvals with quality projects." Staff members in many regional and area offices were actively discouraging communities from applying under this program because of inadequate funding. Even if the community's application is accepted, the level of funding is often less than the community would have been eligible for. Thus, although Springfield was eligible for a $1.9 million Neighborhood Facilities grant, the city received only $900,000.

Criteria for application and approval of grants frequently changes from year to year and differs by region. In 1976, school districts were eligible to apply directly for public works funds, but in 1977 they had to apply through local towns, cities, or counties. Thus the second year of funding, unlike the first, required collaboration between school districts and local government units. Even under the same criteria, programs administered through regional offices tend to reflect the priorities of those offices. The HUD review of the Neighborhood Facilities Program again reports, "Some area offices give priority to social program delivery rather than referral services, or to employment programs rather than recreation programs. Other area offices prefer funding a number of low-cost facilities rather than a few high-cost facilities. A few prefer funding rehabilitation of existing structures to new construction."

Even though federal programs are continually changing, it seems probable that areas of high unemployment and poverty will be able to tap federal funding sources. Less needy areas will continue to find difficulty in attracting federal funding. In any case, communities should continually monitor federal funding programs, keep up to date on changing eligibility criteria, and become familiar with the individual preferences of regional grant-approving officers.

Private funds

Soliciting funds from foundations and corporations for purposes of constructing or renovating facilities is less likely to be successful than for planning or supporting programs.

Occasionally local contributors, whether foundations, corporations, or individuals, have donated money for facilities when other sources were insufficient. Individual donors are more likely to be found in small towns or cities with large family-owned businesses and industries. Community fund raising drives for specific facilities, such as a swimming pool, are not uncommon.

Renovation of older buildings sometimes is accomplished through local donations of funds, building materials, and volunteer labor. ■

*HUD. "Neighborhood Facilities: A Study of Operating Facilities" Community Development Evaluation Series No. 1. December, 1971 (pp34-35)

Planning as an ongoing process

Initial planning should provide for continued planning, evaluation, and change after the center is operating. This area is typically given too little consideration in the early stages and the mechanisms for carrying it out are rarely established. Yet one of the goals of community school centers is that they be responsive to changing community needs and resources.

The results of this situation are predictable:

- Original tenants and programs become institutionalized.
- Although demand for use of the facility invariably increases, new programs and groups are greeted with a "no vacancy" sign.
- Attempts at change are perceived as threats.
- When change occurs, it is incremental.

Community school centers are not immune from institutionalization. The same programs frequently are offered one year simply because they were offered the previous year. Changing tenants becomes a question of proving that an agency did something wrong, rather than deciding that another agency is needed more. This is particularly true when agency councils, or councils having heavy agency representation, are making tenant decisions. Incumbent agencies naturally look after their own collective interests. At none of the centers studied had any agency been denied continued tenancy.

The openness to innovation and willingness to consider all suggestions that characterize the early planning stages too often disappear after the center opens. Assessment of community needs becomes a one-time event. And when change does occur, it tends to be small modifications to existing programs rather than major reorganizations.*

Just as conflict should be anticipated and procedures established for handling it, reassessment of goals and programs should be anticipated and planned for.

Several community school centers attempt to have "continuous" review and evaluation, but this is unrealistic and has not resulted in any major redirection of programs. Change in communities tends to be continuous, but it is not perceptible continuously. It is a truth of the psychology of perception that discreet amounts of change have to occur before change is noticed.

The Boston Community School system has attempted an annual review of community needs and center goals and programs. However, judging from the annual reports, a year is also too short a time period. A thorough assessment of the state of the community and community needs is a time consuming process in itself. If this takes place yearly, it takes away from time which should be spent operating the center. A year is almost always too short for a new program to establish itself and prove its worth. It places an unfair burden on agencies which run programs if they are expected to reach their highest level in such short time.

Some kind of periodic total assessment should be part of the center's operation, however. Perhaps a three- or four-year assessment would be frequent enough to keep up with changing needs, and, at the same time, a long enough time for programs to prove their worth, and for changes in the community to become evident.

This assessment should include community needs and resources, governing structure, programming, and spatial allocation. It should be conducted by people who are "outside" the center as well as those who are actively involved. Perhaps a group similar to the original planning group could be assembled, with a broad mandate to evaluate and suggest changes. The mechanism has to allow for drastic change, if that is deemed necessary.

There should, additionally, be a set of short-term goals established by the original planners, against which "success" can be measured. Success is not absolute, and each center should rate its success based on its own goals. It follows that goals should be reachable and that setting new goals should be part of the assessment process. ■

*This is not to espouse major reorganization as a goal, only to say that it ought to be an available alternative if necessary.

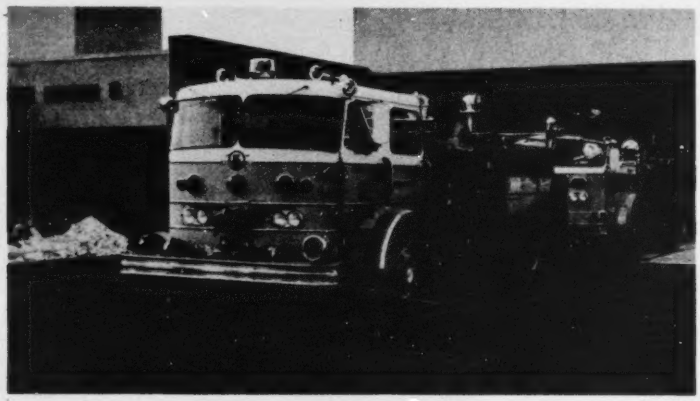
Future trends

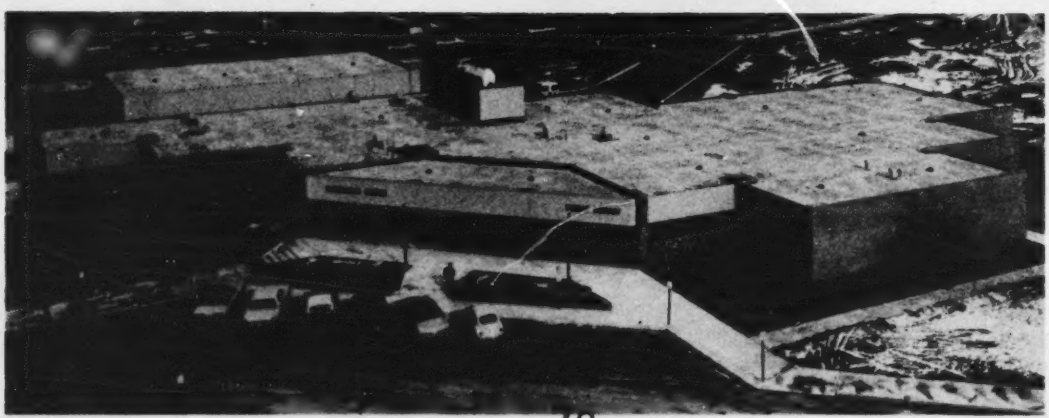
More and more communities will be developing community school centers as continuing financial pressures force government and private agencies to seek ways of reducing costs through sharing resources, as school spaces become available due to enrollment decline, and as new services are demanded for which there are no existing facilities, e.g., day care.

One trend is certain: the pressures that caused community school centers to develop in the first place are going to intensify.

Community school centers have proved to have a significant impact on the "livability" of their neighborhoods at a time when neighborhood and city revitalization is a major thrust across the nation. Networks of such centers throughout a city will probably develop. In some cases each center will be oriented towards its own neighborhood. In smaller cities and towns, each center may specialize in one type of service, and together they will provide comprehensive services.

New center in Arlington, Va., houses fire station, visitors' center, public library, and recreation center





Some cities are taking one or another aspect of community school centers and developing it further. Some examples of these diverging, but related, trends follow.

• Arlington County, Virginia, has expanded joint financing and multiple use in a variety of ways other than the two community school centers it constructed. A newly built facility houses a recreation center, visitors' center, fire station, and public library. Services such as security and grounds maintenance are shared by county and schools and they are considering a joint purchasing department.

• Additional kinds of cooperation between schools, municipalities, and agencies are increasing as resources are pooled to meet joint needs.

In Cincinnati, a joint project of the city, the schools, and the Cincinnati Zoological Society produced a laboratory school, constructed by the school for use by high school students at the zoo.

• A 1977 law in California takes off on the issues of excess school space and the desire to avoid closing under-populated neighborhood schools. It authorizes school districts to rent or lease vacant classrooms in operating schools to "other school districts, educational agencies, governmental units, nonprofit organizations, community agencies, professional agencies, commercial and noncommercial firms, corporations, partnerships, businesses, and individuals."

The law also picks up on the theme of community involvement by requiring that an advisory board, representative of the community, develop and hold public hearings on a priority list of uses for surplus space, to determine "limits of tolerance" for use of space. In addition, the municipal planning board must change the zoning category from "school" to "school and compatible multiple use" before the law can be applied locally.

Although no district has yet acted on this law, several are in the process of doing so, and at least one of these intends to use it as an active revenue-producing source for the school district. Passage of Proposition 13 may prompt other school districts to use this law for similar purposes. It remains to be seen to what degree the surplus space will be used for community/service/government functions and to what degree it will be used as a commercial real estate venture.

• In Baltimore and Atlanta the city governments have adopted the idea of developing neighborhood service centers as part of city revitalization efforts. In Baltimore, the centers reflect the experience of the Dunbar center, in that they are intended solely for government social service agencies, not as community gathering places. In Atlanta, the centers serve both functions.

Centers in Atlanta are being constructed adjacent to existing school buildings. There appears to be very little coordination between the responsible city agency and the school department at top executive levels. The degree of cooperation is established at the local building level.

• In Philadelphia two community centers have been constructed along with new schools as a joint venture between the city and the schools. One is administered through the schools and the other through a community corporation under contract to the city.

• In many places existing school buildings are being renovated as community service and recreation centers. Although owned by the school district, they are often operated by the town or recreation board and do not house regular K-12 classes.

• In Minneapolis, which already has a network of community school centers, the local advisory councils are being asked to recommend uses for schools that will be vacated in several years' time. Recommendations have included conversion to community centers, and sale for commercial or residential development. ■